

THIJSEN ET AL.  
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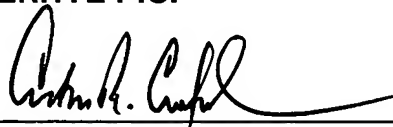
**REMARKS**

The claims have been amended to eliminate multiple dependent claims, without prejudice. The specification has been amended to include a cross-reference to the parent applications and to add an Abstract to the Invention.

Respectfully submitted,

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## **ABSTRACT**

The invention relates to a polymer matrix for extending the vase life of cut flowers, which matrix comprises a charged and crosslinked polymer, wherein the matrix, in the presence of water, forms a gel, which gel immobilizes bacteria on the basis of electrostatic interactions between the gel and the bacteria. Further, the invention relates to a gel obtained by contacting the polymer matrix according to the invention with a limited amount of water. Also, the invention relates to an envelope containing a particular amount of the matrix or gel according to the invention. The invention also relates to a care product for cut flowers which comprises the polymer matrix or the gel according to the invention.